

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-23. Canceled.

Claim 24. (New) A heat thickening composition comprising at least one heat-sensitive copolymer,

wherein said heat-sensitive copolymer comprises a polymer segment

and at least two polymer side segments,

wherein either said polymer segment has or said polymer side

segments have a lower critical solubility temperature of

between 30°C and 80°C,

wherein said polymer side segments are identical or different, and

wherein said heat-sensitive copolymer has a comb structure.

Claim 25. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 24, wherein said polymer segment has a lower critical solubility temperature of between 30°C and 80°C.

- Claim 26. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 24, wherein said polymer side segments have a lower critical solubility temperature of between 30°C and 80°C.
- Claim 27. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 24, wherein said heat thickening composition comprises more than one heat-sensitive copolymer,
- wherein said copolymers form a crosslinked structure comprising nodes and connections,
- wherein said polymer segments have a lower critical solubility temperature of between 30°C and 80°C and form said nodes,
- and
- wherein said polymer side segments do not have a lower critical solubility temperature of between 30°C and 80°C and form said connections.
- Claim 28. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 24, wherein said polymer segment does not have a lower critical solubility temperature of between 30°C and 80°C, and further wherein said polymer segment is water-soluble between 30°C and 80°C.

- Claim 29. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 24, wherein said polymer side segments do not have a lower critical solubility temperature of between 30°C and 80°C, and further wherein said polymer side segments are water-soluble between 30°C and 80°C.
- Claim 30. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 24, wherein said polymer segment or said polymer side segments not having said lower critical solubility temperature of between 30°C and 80°C is/are water-soluble between 10°C and 100°C.
- Claim 31. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 24, wherein said polymer segment does not have a lower critical solubility temperature of between 30°C and 80°C, wherein said polymer segment is water-soluble, and wherein said polymer segment is an ethylenic polymer.
- Claim 32. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 31, wherein said polymer segment results from the co(polymerization) of vinyl, acrylic, styrene, diene, or vinyl ester monomers.
- Claim 33. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 32, wherein said monomers are selected from the group consisting of vinylsulfonic acid, methallylsulfonic acid, (meth)acrylic acid, diacids, maleic anhydride,

acrylamide, styrenesulfonic acid, vinylbenzoic acid, and derivatives and salts thereof.

Claim 34. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 32, wherein said monomers are selected from the group consisting of acrylic monomers, methacrylic acid, acrylamides, derivatives of acrylamides, fumaric acid, maleic acid, sulfonated monomers, alkaline salts of sulfonated monomers, and vinylsulfonate.

Claim 35. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 31, wherein said polymer segment has a molecular weight greater than 1,000.

Claim 36. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 31, wherein said polymer segment has a molecular weight greater than 20,000.

Claim 37. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 32, wherein said polymer segment results from the polymerization of acrylic acid and/or 2-acrylamidomethyl-propane sulfonic acid.

Claim 38. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 28, wherein said polymer segment is derived from polyoxyalkylene polymers.

- Claim 39. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 38, wherein said polyoxyalkylene polymer consists of one or more oxyalkylene units having no more than six carbon atoms.
- Claim 40. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 38, wherein said polyoxyalkylene polymer comprises oxyethylene units and/or oxypropylene units.
- Claim 41. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 38, wherein said polymer segment comprises at least five oxyalkylene units.
- Claim 42. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 25, wherein said heat-resistant copolymer comprises 0.1 molar % to 50 molar % of said polymer segments.
- Claim 43. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 25, wherein said heat-resistant copolymer comprises 0.1 molar % to 5 molar % of said polymer segments.
- Claim 44. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 26, wherein said heat-resistant copolymer comprises 0.1 molar % to 50 molar % of said polymer side segments.

Claim 45. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 26, wherein said heat-resistant copolymer comprises 0.1 molar % to 5 molar % of said polymer side segments.

Claim 46. (New) The heat thickening composition according to Claim 24, wherein said heat-resistant copolymer is selected from the group consisting of
(1) copolymers prepared from polyoxyethylene-polyoxypropylene-polyoxyethylene triblock macromonomer and from acrylic acid, respective molar percentages: 2.3 and 97.7; (2) copolymers prepared from polyoxyethylene-polyoxypropylene-polyoxyethylene triblock macromonomer and from acrylic acid, respective molar percentages: 1.6 and 98.4;
(3) copolymers prepared from polyoxyethylene-polyoxypropylene-polyoxyethylene triblock macromonomer and from acrylic acid, respective molar percentages: 3 and 97; and (4) copolymers prepared from polyoxyethylene-polyoxypropylene-polyoxyethylene triblock macromonomer and from acrylic acid, respective molar percentages: 2 and 98.